

## Mill River

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ers were able to sort out the confusing audible signals and got to the scene. Another bystander sought additional help. The boaters were able to calm everyone down, and while holding the victim's head above water, relieved some of the tension on the chain so, once relaxed, the victim was able to work herself free just as professional assistance arrived at the scene.

Luckily we were at the right place at the right time to have averted serious trouble and the inevitable tragedy; the Cohasset Police and Fire Departments response time was phenomenal; I'm sure that they too were pleased to have been able to have served as back-up, this time.

In trying to constructively evaluate the situation, I am reminded of a brief conversation with a fellow boater on a previous weekend. We were sitting in the eddy by the bridge, awaiting our turns to play the waves amid some 20 other boaters and about 100 swimmers. My companion asked, "who is looking after these kids?" and my reply was, "I'm afraid that we are!" I am frightened by the profundity of this discussion.

For serious boaters, the Mill River affords a unique opportunity for learning and improving paddling skills in moving water during the summer when water levels elsewhere are too low; the nearest alternative "playing spot" is over 100 miles from Boston.

For young swimmers in summer, the Mill River is a wonderful place to beat the heat and chill the blood in a similarly unique manner.

With some common sense it should be possible to avoid extreme danger if both boaters and swimmers would consider the following points:

—Boaters should realize that their boats are hard and have sharp ends, they are difficult to handle precisely in heavy water, and can be a

hazard to swimmers; it is always sensible to look for swimmers before playing the waves.

—Swimmers should let the boaters know before they dive in, so the way will be clear; they should swim in groups both for safety and to give everyone a chance to have fun.

—Swimmers should resist the temptation of diving off the bridge or the high rocks — the risk of injury is too great; they should also swim with feet up to avoid sharp barnacles.

—A sensible boater will never boat alone; swimmers should have friends on the bank, who are responsible and able to render assistance if needed; friends and parents are better than police, life guards or the Harbormaster, since they don't have other duties and don't cost the town

money; always be responsible for yourself and be ready to help others — just don't rely too heavily on them for your safety.

—Swimmers and boaters should remember that the rocks south of the bridge are on private land; it is unfair to the landowner if his property is abused; respect other people and pick up any litter while trying not to be overly noisy.

—Remember that Border Street is a public way — be aware of traffic and don't park to create a hazard.

In such a manner, we can all enjoy this unequalled summer oasis together, and hopefully we can continue to avert tragedy.

Very truly yours,  
Roger Marshall  
33 Linnaean St.  
Cambridge



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